



## Journal of Alpine Research | Revue de géographie alpine

95-1 | 2007  
Trafic transalpin

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### Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/rga/210>  
DOI: 10.4000/rga.210  
ISSN: 1760-7426

### Publisher

Association pour la diffusion de la recherche alpine

### Printed version

Date of publication: 15 March 2007  
Number of pages: 103-112  
ISBN: 978-2-200-92328-0  
ISSN: 0035-1121

### Electronic reference

Manfred Perlik, « Logics and Contradictions of Transalpine Transport within the Context of Political and Social Relations in Europe », *Revue de Géographie Alpine | Journal of Alpine Research* [Online], 95-1 | 2007, Online since 03 March 2009, connection on 01 May 2019. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/rga/210> ; DOI : 10.4000/rga.210

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Manfred Perlik

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Translated from German by: Mercury Translations Ltd, London, U.K.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

This article summarises the results of a survey carried out within the framework of the Interreg IIIB project MONITRAF.

## **Three thematic fields with their internal logics to explain the increase in traffic**

### **The political logic**

- 1 Transport and mobility base upon the political and economic logics of an increasingly unifying Europe. Our analysis of *political logic* draws upon on key European documents<sup>1</sup> as well as on certain national laws of Germany and Switzerland. One can subsume to this:
  - The political will to create a European single market to achieve economies of scale which means of a large-scale spatial division of labour.

- Socio-political vision (peace and variety among cultures underneath one common umbrella).
- Regional development without a major social gradient, so that the project does not fail due to internal contradictions.

Table 1. Key figures on the significance of transport within the European union<sup>2</sup>.

	GDP [%]	Jobs [million]	Share of CO <sub>2</sub> immissions [%]
Air transport	2.6	3.1	25
Land transport	11.0	16.0	
Projected growth of freight transport*, 1997-2015: 64%			

- <sup>2</sup> \*Estimations in the Coalition Agreement of the German federal government of 2005
- At the same time, the Europe's political logic shows essential contradictions in its primary objectives:
  - *The European Union is a single market as well as a political community.* In the documents of its founding phase dominate the economic aspects. But at the same time, a political process of integration was set in motion, which saved Europe from major wars. Although the EU as an institution is perceived in quite a controversial manner by its population, the political and cultural integration as well as the enlarged individual mobility are almost never disputed. The EU is both, a market and a political community.
  - *Different patterns of regulations exist under the European umbrella.* The historic heterogeneity of European countries with its various traditional thinking patterns and cultures persists and can be seen in different interpretations in the daily compromise finding in European policy (e.g. in ecological issues or the role of transport).
  - *Different periods of time exist next to each other.* At first there was the ideology of economic growth. Then sustainability was claimed. The most current policies reflect the focus on strong poles which are competitive in a globalised world.
  - *Different interests of transit corridors, peripheral regions, and metropolitan areas.* This is no surprise since it was the cause of the protest movement against the transalpine traffic and against the deterioration of the infrastructure in the mountain region. This means: The coexistence of conflicting rules and regulations is a source of permanent bargaining between interests. Actually, the strategy of the EU to achieve long-term cohesion by linking political and economic integration lends a great significance to mobility. An increase of interaction between the stakeholders is favoured, even by the residents of the mountain regions. Acceptance problems only occur where people are directly concerned. The coexistence of different views and interests offers also a potential for change and innovation in the interest of regions affected by transport but only as long as these regions are considered as demographically, economically, and culturally equivalent.

## The economic logic

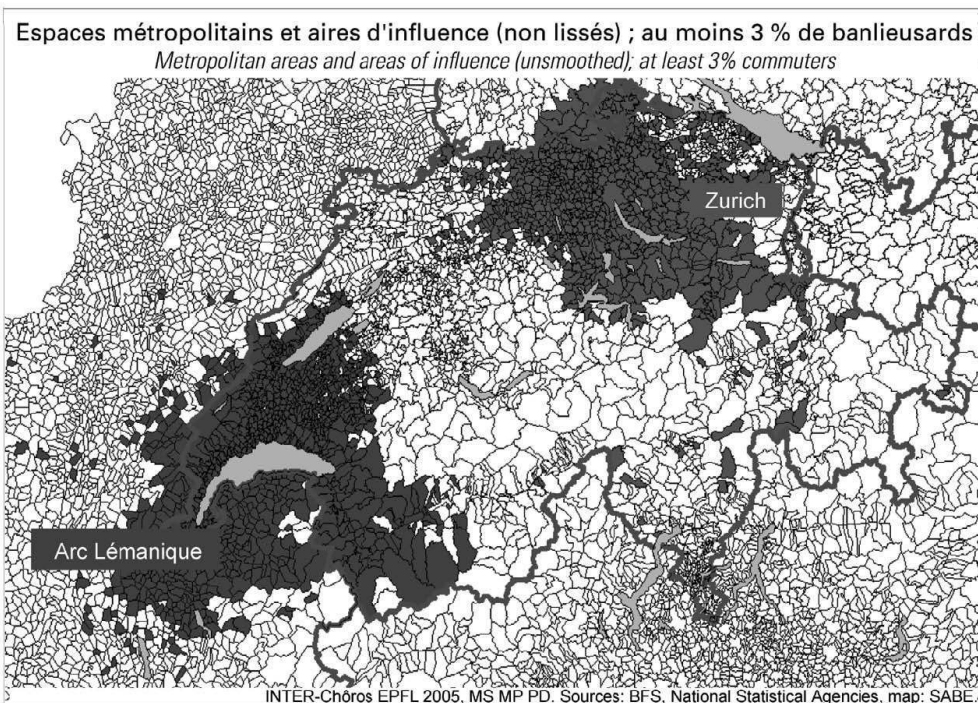
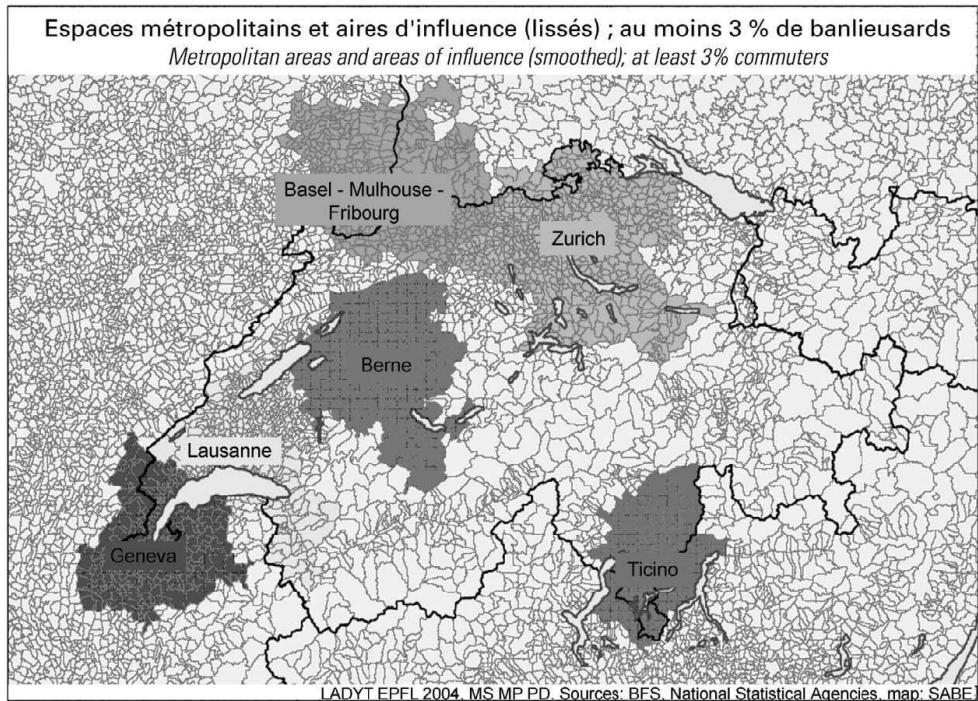
- The analysis of *economic logic* is based on the observable processes of economic reconstruction under global aspects, the choice of location and relocation by enterprises, and the regions' efforts to maintain their respective economic power. The following aspects are relevant in generating traffic:

- The quantitative enlargement of the production of commodities in order to achieve economies of scale as well as to prevent social conflicts of repartition by growth strategies
  - The growing interaction between the economic actors.
  - The weakening of local markets tied to the territory.
  - Transport has a double function: It is a processing step of the production of goods as well as an economic sector with its own interests of exploitation. Thus, logistics business and thus the traffic volume have been steadily increasing.
  - The dominance of transport on the roads is due to a better adjustment of this sector to production requirements (miniaturisation, shorter delivery intervals) and to a change of societal paradigms (accelerated change of product portfolios, greater emphasis on customer satisfaction).
  - New production systems allow for an increased centralisation. Functional and spatial division of labour continues to increase until its disadvantages (i.e. the negative effects of forced mobility) outweigh its advantages.
- 5 This also goes to show the following: Although the economic logic is coherent in itself, contradictions exist nevertheless, the most prominent of them the conflict of interests between the economic actors and, increasingly, between the regions, which also pursue economic objectives (regional growth) in their position as collective actors.

### **The logic of spatial and regional development**

- 6 Spatial development is also an indicator for the shifts in significance, wealth and power between urban and rural areas as well as between individual cities. Thus, the logic of regional development is an interface between economic dynamism and the contingencies of regional stakeholders to shape and implement such developments.
- 7 In the course of time, the main trend runs towards a centralisation of production and decision-making structures, but it is – during periods – interrupted due to socio-political constellations. The current development favours the growth of the metropolitan areas (Fig. 1). There, opportunities of interaction for regional stakeholders and the sociocultural environment necessary for such opportunities are constantly regenerating themselves due to the great amount of heterogeneity, i.e. the fact that old and new elements exist next to each other. Peripheral regions, however, are redesigned into leisure landscapes, mainly causing a decline in significance compared to their earlier function. Through such a structural change, small towns and rural areas lose a variety of features that are related to history, emotions, and the corresponding quality of life.

Figures 1 and 2. In Switzerland, the urban hierarchy acuminates. A model of 6 metropolitan areas has replaced a former 12-pole model. If the centralisation of high-quality services continues, this model could soon be outdated by the 2-pole model shown in the scenario.



Dessemondet, Perlik, Schuler, 2005.

## Normative aspects of logics and their modification

- 8 The illustration of the three logics leads to the result that all three of these topics contain normative elements, even the economic logic which is subjected to ever-changing basic assumptions, preferences, and investment considerations.
- 9 Therefore, the increase in traffic in Europe is a result of:
  - large-scale spatial division of labour in production as a consequence of new economic models and technologies as well as;
  - increasing mobility caused by social and cultural changes.
  - Since individual groups of actors benefit and others suffer from traffic, we can by and large not differentiate between « necessary » and « unnecessary » traffic. The increase in traffic is neither illogical nor abusive, but rather corresponds very well to the model of worldwide production and repartition currently existing. This model is productive – inasmuch and as long as the basic assumptions are generally shared and the economic, social, cultural, and ecological impacts caused by them are accepted.
- 10 All the three logics are embedded into societal and institutional systems called *regimes* in the concept of the French regulation theory. On the one hand, there is the *accumulation regime* defining the technological conditions, the organisation of production and the impacts and risks put up in that regard; on the other hand, there is the *regulation regime* defining the repartition of value added but also the opportunities and impacts imposed to the individual regions. These regimes always refer to a stable long-term relation between two different paths of action for the collective actors. Such regimes can be either competition-oriented or rather retributive; they can emphasise regional hierarchies or equitable regional development. These factors are decisive for the influence of specific groups of stakeholders or regions within Europe.

## Goal conflicts and preference changes

- 11 Conflicts arise and changes happen even within stable regimes. The traffic-related EU documents show a great bandwidth in the period of time between the Founding Agreement of the European Community of 1957 and the White Paper on Traffic of 2001. These documents reflect the different times in which they were drawn up as well as the quite diverging manner in which the EU member states perceived problems. Goal conflicts, colliding interests, or preference changes always allow a variety of decision-making paths, at the same time indicating a potential for change in the future. One of these conflicts of objectives are the diverging interests between countries with manufacturing or research activities and countries with commercial activities (see box 1).



## Box 1: Parallel imports of pharmaceutical products

Specialised large pharmaceutical wholesalers import or re-import patent-protected drugs into another EU country. This is mainly profitable because of the fact that the drug prices are kept at a low level in some countries in order to maintain a functioning health system. Such an import – or re-import – out of these countries into high-price countries leads to a trading advantage. For this reason, the stock of drugs is bought up from foreign countries, transported into the import country, repackaged, and labelled with the consumer regulations stipulated by national law. In Switzerland, this is prohibited because although patent protection<sup>1</sup> expires on the national level as soon as the patent owner launches its product on the market, it is still valid with regard to foreign imports (principle of « national exhaustion »). This protects patent owners and is in the interest of Switzerland as research location. Within the EU, parallel imports are mandatory. While this was originally created in the interest of the European single market, now the reduction of costs in the healthcare sector is the main argument. This is possible because patent protection is « regionally exhausted »: If a patent-protected product is introduced on the market of one EU member state (« region »), the protection of this patent owner against unwanted imports from other EU member states expires in all other EU member states (« regions »). However, it still applies to unwanted imports from non-EU member states. Thus, this question needs to be assessed from a societal view: Is the simple re-packing of drugs contributing to higher productivity (argument: increasing competition for the sake of general welfare) or economic squander (since no new use values are created and added value is neutralising itself)? There are surveys stressing explicitly that savings are mainly for the benefit of the wholesale sector and not the consumers (e.g. NERA/SJ BERWIN&CO/IFFRESEARCH, 1999).

## Unleashing the flow of traffic in post-fordism

- 12 If internal and external contradictions exceed, even stable societal conditions (social compromises, risk assessments, consumption patterns) are not sustainable anymore. A regime change occurs. Such a change of paradigms set in in the mid-1970s after three decades of uninterrupted economic growth. Until then, the prevailing model was to spread out social conflicts by distributing the gains of productivity among all social groups and regions according to the bargained social compromise. Suddenly, it became obvious that other goods would become scarce instead. Biophysical qualities got an own value and were managed according to aspects of efficiency. As a consequence, the model of equally distributing the technical infrastructure and social achievements was replaced by a model of strong differentiation claiming *equivalence* instead of *equality*. Recently, even equivalence is called into question: The process of *shrinking cities* in East Germany is commented by the German planning authority that it will not be possible to maintain equivalence everywhere (BBR, 2004), although this stands in conflict with the German constitution.
- 13 One of the consequences of the economic crisis was the redeployment of investment capital from industrial production to economic sectors with a higher return on investment as well as a re-organisation of production, better known under the term globalisation. The spatial division of functions increased once more, this time covering greater, worldwide distances (box 2).

**Box 2: Transport relevant macro-trends of the regime change from Fordism to post-Fordism 1975 – 1995**

- The 1973 petrol crisis is coped by technical and organisational solutions, thereby ameliorating productivity; it results the increase, not the limitation of traffic.
- National protection of trade is suspended by means of international agreements. Foreign direct investment and trans-national mergers increase, thus enhancing exchange and personal mobility.
- The national validity of social systems with its regional balance is dismantling. Territorial ties loosen, labour and goods markets enlarge.
- After initial resistance, computer and telecommunication technologies are accepted and accelerate global networks, cultural penetration, and the exchange of goods.
- New socio-cultural values as the consumption and protection of landscapes appear and compete with traditional consumer goods, thereby creating a large-scale functional division of labour between different regions.
- The call for transparency and controlling opportunities increases at all levels and leads to an increase of interactions and personal contacts between the stakeholders.
- Differentiation and uniqueness are introduced as strategies against the devaluation of production (concerning products as well as regions) and lead to smaller, more frequent, and more long-distance transports.
- The model of an equal development (regionally and socially) is abandoned with economic as well as socio-cultural arguments, thereby creating additional migrations.

- 14 Originally, the regime change was triggered by the lack of energy resources. It is remarkable how the new post-Fordist accumulation regime ameliorated energy-saving on the technological side, but at the same time unleashed the total consumption of fossil energy without thinking of countermeasures from early on. This contradiction remains unsolved to date and has continuously exacerbated with the military capture of resources since 1990.

### **An efficient reduction of traffic may only be achieved by a regime change**

- 15 The argumentation so far showed that the existing logics are coherent in themselves and contradictory at the same time. In their coherence, these logics prove that traffic and its impact on the affected regions are an integral part of stable regimes, which create regional winners and losers through assessments and preferences. The contradictions described show that existing societal arrangements can change in principle. As a consequence of modified preferences, the current position of the EU with regard to transport is more differentiated than before; the White Paper on Traffic proclaims measures to reduce the increase of transport. However, the last decades show that the effects of traffic became particularly negative when Fordist regime turned to post-Fordism. Therefore, one cannot expect to solve the problems of transport sufficiently and in a sustainable manner only by means of technical solutions or a modification of the modal split. While technical and relocation strategies are vital in the medium run, they create additional transport capacities at the same time. In the long run, transport has to be reduced in order to save resources, space, and working hours (the impacts of forced mobility) and comply with the Kyoto Protocol.
- 16 An efficient reduction of traffic requires a change in the relation between the relevant societal actors and, consequently, another regime change in terms of *how is produced* as well as *how opportunities and impacts are shared*. This will be a long-term task, as already the change from Fordist to post-Fordist regime showed its effects very retarded and took



place over a long time (in the case of Switzerland more than 20 years; Schuler/Perlik/Pasche, 2004).

## Possible framework conditions of resource-friendly regimes

### The political logic

<i>The current situation</i>	<i>A possible scenario</i>
In the interest of European integration, goal conflicts as mobility or regional equivalence are settled in favour of the implementation of the single market.	The European unification process is consolidated. The Single Market is working and generally accepted due to its socially responsible set-up, and thus does not have to be put into force as a political principle.
	Other institutional rules which model better the distance costs (construction of infrastructure, energy, working hours), may take precedence, thus reducing sustainability gaps in the fields of resources, security, social relations, human rights, and market power.
	Change of the institutional rules reduces the polarisation between decision-making and executive regions. Redundancies may touch immediate efficiency goals but facilitate a reduction of cluster risks.

### The economic logic

<i>The current situation</i>	<i>A possible scenario</i>
Existing sectors are relocated or abandoned. New sectors with a high specific added value are located in the metropolitan areas. Personal mobility and traffic flows are intensifying.	Ecological/social standards assimilate on a global level. Incentives for relocation and global sourcing decrease. Transports are needed rather for exchange of new products than for the exploitation of cost advantages.
	Global agreements allow to promote regional production systems with special features and more difficult production conditions (agriculture, locally-bound handicraft, industry) due to social and cultural reasons.
	Societal resistance against the overwhelming market power of specific industries or corporations is not condemned as protectionist behaviour but interpreted as the will for participation and innovation.

### The logic of spatial development

<i>The current situation</i>	<i>A possible scenario</i>
Europe is experiencing a boost of centralisation in responding to global competition. New functions are assigned to scarcely-populated areas independent whether these agree or not.	The polycentric concept of regional development of the EUREK (CE, 1999) is implemented successfully and strengthens the functional position of medium-sized agglomerations and scarcely-populated areas.
	Spatial density and socio-cultural heterogeneity are promoted as qualities for innovation processes. This requires an agreement about the changes in the regulation of real estate markets and new concepts of spatial use.
	As the last major change of paradigms replaced the model of equal regional development with the model of differentiation, a new regime change puts the focus on the fair repartition of opportunities and impacts.

## Five Recommendations for Regions with Transit Corridors

- 17 *Long-term perspective:* The change to new regime of regulation is only possible on a longterm basis. As the example of Switzerland shows, the effects will be visible only very retarded. Therefore, any future changes need to be initiated now.
  - 18 *Capacity to act:* To increase the quality of life will only be successful if the local economy differs not so much from other regions and if a critical mass of earning and dwelling population may make itself heard on the national or European level.
  - 19 *Gain in competences:* The regions, especially the sparsely populated ones, constantly need to reinvent their right to exist. One possibility would be to positively rephrase specific problems and impacts and make use of these in order to acquire new special knowledge, for instance by investing in research and knowledge capacities dealing with the region's traffic impacts.
  - 20 *Division of labour:* The spatial division of labour currently existing in Europe needs to be taken into account. It would be a social as well as an ecological disaster if one of the two European main industrial regions – Northern Italy and South Germany – declined economically as a result of ongoing spatial centralisation. And it is more than ever unacceptable to hope for a return to « autarkic » lifestyles or economies since this will probably only be the case after sever social or ethnic conflicts.
  - 21 *Regional ties:* The rural areas have safeguarded regional embeddedness for a long time and in many cases still continue to do so through agriculture, handicraft, and industry. It would be a mistake to weaken them anymore. But nevertheless the regions need to attract a minimum of new people, business activities, not just residents and tourists. For this it is important to strengthen the urban elements in the mountains.
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## APPENDIXES

### Laws and ordinances

#### *European Union*

- EU Community Agreement (Consolidated Version of the Founding Agreement of the European Community)
- White Paper on Traffic
- Council resolutions of Lisbon, Resolution 1692/96 Trans-European Networks
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Report on Economic and Social Cohesion (Cohesion Report)
- SDEC (1999)
- EU-Mountain Study (NORDREGIO, 2004)

#### *Alpine Convention*

- Framework Agreement and Traffic Protocol

#### *Switzerland*

- Federal Constitution, incl. articles for the protection of the Alps (Alpine Initiative),
- Law on Spatial Planning (RPG),
- Law on Investment Assistance (IHG),
- New Regional Policy (EXPERTENKOMMISSION, 2003)
- Report on Spatial Development (ARE, 2005)
- Federal Law on the Transfer of Transalpine Heavy-duty Traffic to Railways of October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1999.

#### *Germany:*

- Basic Law (Grundgesetz) und Law on Spatial Development (ROG)

## NOTES

1. For details please see references.
2. Information of the EU DG C II in the draft version of the EU's 7<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme.

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## ABSTRACTS

In the Alpine regions, two conflicting interests exist: One part complains about a lack of accessibility. The other part is connected to international roads and is mainly affected by the impacts of transalpine traffic. These regions frequently argue that a great deal of such transports are superfluous or needless. This article is based on a study which discusses the following questions: 1 - Is there any needless transport that could be removed without substitution? 2 - Are strategies of changing modal split or market solutions as road pricing sufficient to reduce transport and its impact? 3 - Under what conditions may transport be reduced in a more comprehensive manner? Answers are given by analysing three fields relevant for traffic growth in their internal coherence: the political logic, the economic logic, and the logic of spatial development. They are interpreted within a regulationist approach. But there are contradictions within different primary societal/political goals as well as between these goals and economic ones, especially the contradiction between competitiveness and equal living conditions in different regions. Such contradictions can be explained by the process of European unification, by the different interests of the most important stakeholders, and by the change of values in the last 30 years that may be characterised as a regime change. The three logics are man-made rapports and therefore subject to change by the stakeholders in the long run. According to the concept of sustainable development on a global level and in the interest of the regions concerned, more radical solutions within the meaning of a revisited regime of accumulation and regulation respectively, should be considered, which may be valid in the long run.

Dans les régions alpines, deux intérêts contradictoires coexistent. Une part de la population se plaint du manque d'accessibilité et de mobilité, l'autre part de la population est correctement desservie par les axes routiers internationaux mais en subit des nuisances importantes. Ces régions argumentent qu'une bonne part de ces transports est superflue, voire inutile. Cet article rend compte d'une étude qui s'est intéressée aux points suivants : 1 - Est-ce que des transports superflus ou inutiles pourraient être déplacés sans être remplacés ? 2 - Est-ce que les politiques fondées sur des redistributions modales ou sur le marché, comme la tarification des passages, sont suffisantes pour réduire les transports et leurs impacts ? 3 - Sous quelles conditions le transport peut-il être réduit de la manière la plus complète ? Des réponses sont proposées ici en analysant trois champs pertinents pour comprendre l'augmentation du trafic : la logique politique, la logique économique, et la logique de développement spatial. Ces logiques sont interprétées selon une approche régulationniste. Chacune a son application en terme d'arguments normatifs. Néanmoins, il y a des contradictions entre les différents objectifs sociétaux et/ou politiques et les objectifs économiques, et plus particulièrement entre la recherche de compétitivité et le respect de conditions de vie équitables entre les différentes régions. De telles contradictions peuvent être expliquées par les processus d'unification européenne, par les intérêts divergents entre les acteurs majeurs et par les changements de valeur des trente dernières années, qui peuvent être caractérisés comme un changement de régime. Les trois logiques sont le fruit de rapports sociaux et sont donc sujettes à des changements sur le long terme par les acteurs. Selon les principes du développement durable, à un niveau global, et dans l'intérêt des régions concernées, des solutions plus radicales en terme de régime accumulatif revisité ou de régime régulateur, doivent être considérées et validées sur le long terme.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés:** forces motrices de mobilité, régimes institutionnels, intégration européenne, cohésion régionale

**Keywords:** driving forces of mobility, institutional regimes, European integration, regional cohesion

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